

Remarks/Arguments:

The pending claims are 1-41. Applicants note with appreciation that the Examiner has allowed claims 4, 5, 7 and 8. Claims 6, 12, 13, 16, 21, 24, 27, 28, 30, 31, 34, 35-41 have been amended. No new matter is introduced therein.

Claims 6 and 12-31 have been objected to as having improper multiple claim dependency. In response to this objection, multiple dependent claims 6, 12, 13, 16, 21, 24, 27, 28, 30, and 31 have been amended. Accordingly, applicants request that this objection be withdrawn and that these claims be treated on the merits.

Claims 34-41 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. Since these claims have been amended, applicants request that this rejection be withdrawn and that these claims be treated on the merits.

Claims 1-3, 9-11, 32, and 33 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Asano et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,848,389) in view of Silverman (U.S. Patent No. 5,890,117). The rejection is traversed.

Claim 1, for example, recites, in part:

analyzing means of. . .selecting a standard sentence pattern.

Claim 1 also recites, in part, a

speech synthesizing means of performing speech synthesis of the sentence on which the word replacement has been performed, by use of prosody information previously assigned to at least the selected standard sentence pattern.

Accordingly, claim 1 recites that prosody information is assigned to the selected standard sentence pattern that is provided by the analyzing means. That is, claim 1 recites that the standard sentence pattern includes prosody information that is assigned in advance and the speech synthesizing means performs speech synthesis by using the prosody information. As explained below, Silverman does not use prosody information in this way.

The Asano patent is directed to an invention for translating a spoken language into another language. In Figure 10 of Asano, speech recognition is performed in

block 41. The result of speech recognition is transferred to a translating unit which transfers the words to a translating unit 42. Translating unit 42 translates the words from one language to a second language. The output of the translating unit is inputted into a speech synthesizer that is not shown in Figure 10. (col. 12, line 34-col. 13, line 40). Page 5 of the Office Action acknowledges that Asano does not explicitly teach using prosody information during the speech synthesis process. Because Asano does not disclose using prosody during the speech synthesis process, the Office Action contends that column 31, lines 10-50 of Silverman discloses such a use of prosody. Although, Silverman does use prosody, Silverman would not have made it obvious to use prosody in Asano in the way that is recited in claim 1.

In Silverman, prosody is applied to certain specific types of phrases; specifically, telephone carrier phrases. The device in Silverman is directed at making synthesized text more understandable by improving how the synthesized words sound to the human ear. The Silverman device modifies such things as accent, speed of the synthesized speech, pitch, and loudness. (col. 6, lines 1-53). The Silverman device does not disclose an analyzing means as recited in claim 1.

Specifically, claim 1 recites that prosody information is assigned to the selected standard sentence pattern that is provided by the analyzing means. That is, claim 1 recites that the standard sentence pattern includes prosody information that is assigned in advance and the speech synthesizing means performs speech synthesis by using the prosody information. In order to combine the Silverman device with the Asano device, there would have to be a suggestion in one of the prior art references to use prosody information in the speech recognizing apparatus 41 in Asano and that the prosody information had been assigned in advance. There is nothing in Asano that suggests applying advance assigned prosody information to its speech recognizing apparatus 41. More specifically, the Asano device calculates word resemblance degrees that are similar to the standard sentence pattern recited in claim 1. There is nothing in Asano that suggests assigning prosody information in advance to the word resemblance degrees in Asano. Similarly, there is nothing in Silverman that suggests applying advance assigned prosody information to the word resemblance degrees in Asano.

Accordingly, claim 1 is not subject to rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Asano et al. in view of Silverman. Since claim 2 and amended claim 34 depend from claim 1, they are also not subject to the same rejection.

Similarly to claim 1, claim 3 recites, in part:

analyzing means of ... selecting a standard sentence pattern.

Claim 3 also recites, in part, a

speech synthesizing means of performing speech synthesis of the selected standard sentence pattern by use of prosody information previously assigned to at least the selected standard sentence pattern.

As shown above, the cited prior art does not disclose or suggest applying advance assigned prosody information to a selected standard sentence pattern. Accordingly, claim 3 is not subject to rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Asano et al. in view of Silverman. Since amended claim 35 depends from claim 3, it is also not subject to the same rejection.

As noted above claims 4 and 5 have been allowed. Since amended claim 6 depends from claims 4 or 5, amended claim 6 is now allowable. Since amended claims 36 and 37 depend from claims 4 and 5, respectively, amended claims 36 and 37 are allowable.

Also as noted above, claims 7 and 8 have been allowed. Since amended claims 38 and 39 depend from claims 7 and 8, respectively, amended claims 38 and 39 are allowable.

Claim 9 recites, in part:

analyzing means of ... identifying a predetermined response standard sentence pattern corresponding to the selected standard sentence pattern, and replacing all or some of the standard words of the identified response standard sentence pattern with the corresponding words.

Claim 9 also recites, in part, a

speech synthesizing means of performing speech synthesis of the sentence on which the word replacement has been

performed, by use of prosody information previously assigned to at least the identified response standard sentence pattern.

For the reasons stated above, claim 9 is not subject to rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Asano et al. in view of Silverman. Furthermore, since claim 10 and amended claim 40 depend from claim 9, they are also not subject to the same rejection.

Claim 11 recites, in part:

analyzing means of ... identifying a predetermined response standard sentence pattern ...

* * * * *

speech synthesizing means of performing speech synthesis of the identified response standard sentence pattern by use of prosody information previously assigned to at least the identified response standard sentence pattern.

For the reasons stated above, claim 11 is not subject to rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Asano et al. in view of Silverman. Since amended claim 41 depends from claim 11, it is also not subject to the same rejection.

Claim 32 recites, in part:

selecting a standard sentence pattern ...

* * * * *

replacing all or some of the standard words of the selected standard sentence pattern ...

* * * * *

performing speech synthesis of the sentence on which the word replacement has been performed, by use of prosody information previously assigned to at least the selected standard sentence pattern ...

Claim 33 recites, in part:

selecting a standard sentence pattern ...

* * * * *

performing speech analysis of the selected standard sentence pattern by use of prosody information previously

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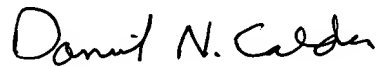
assigned to at least the selected standard sentence pattern ...

For the reasons stated above, claims 32 and 33 are not subject to rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Asano et al. in view of Silverman.

Amended claims 12, 13, 16, 21, 24, 27, 28, 30, 31 are multiple dependent claims. As explained above, these claims depend from claims which are either allowed or claims that are in condition for allowance. Accordingly, none of these claims are subject to rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Asano et al. in view of Silverman. Furthermore, since claims 14 and 15 depend from claim 13; claims 17-20 depend from claim 16; claims 22-23, 25-26 depend from claim 21; and claim 29 depends from claim 28, they are also not subject to the same rejection.

For all of the above reasons, applicants request that all pending claims in this application be allowed.

Respectfully submitted,



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